Behind That Optimistic Report to Nixon on Vietnam, P. 3

The Easiest Bloodbath To "Prevent" Is The One We Ourselves Are Carrying On

"The whole concept of Vietnamization is wrong. What we have to be aiming for is to get the fighting stopped. I have very little patience with the people who talk about the massacre that may happen at some future date if we withdraw, because there's a massacre going on now."
—Averell Harriman at Johns Hopkins, November 14.

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Bitter Battles Lie Ahead

From my days as an editorial writer on one of the few pro-New Deal papers in the country, I remember how bitterly the Democrats complained about the hostility of the press and radio; they portrayed Roosevelt as a dangerous revolutionary. When he won his landslide victory in 1936 it was over their overwhelming opposition. We felt as the Nixon crowd does now that the news media were one-sided, but there are crucial differences between the two periods. Poor people don't own newspapers. The news media now as then are in wealthy, mostly conservative and largely Republican hands. It takes a lot of steam in the boiler before they turn against a Republican President. Their growing opposition testifies to the unpopularity of the war and the spreading suspicion that Nixon wants to hang on, whatever the cost, until he can get a political victory. Nixon might as well complain about the unfairness of the stock market. It has been going down steadily since it sized up the Nov. 3 speech as the signal for a prolonged war. Nothing Huntley ever said to Brinkley is as subversive as the Dow-Jones ticker. Wall Street—the citadel of the GOP—has lost confidence in Nixon and in Nixon's war.

As In The Athens of Papadapoulos

Nixon's real complaint is that the news media don't agree with him. Since the First Amendment doesn't require the press to agree with the President, he doesn't dare say this openly and instead charges unfairness. It is remarkable how little evidence of this the Administration is able to cite, after gathering transcripts from every TV station on what they said about the Nov. 3 speech. When Agnew—Nixon's Papadapoulos and official cleanser of the U.S. media—went on TV ten days later all he could offer was a scurrilous attack on Averell Harriman and a colorful but curiously vague bill of particulars. He complained about "a raised eyebrow, an inflection of the voice, a caustic remark dropped in the middle of a broadcast." What caustic remark? What insidious inflection? Whose raised eyebrow? Couldn't Klein find anything more specific? Is this Athens where the cops even watch eyebrows?

Equally feeble in its vagueness was Agnew's attack a week later on the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. You'd think Agnew could do better than complaining about one story which missed the early edition and that the Pope's support for Nixon made page 11 instead of page 1. Is that all the White House researchers could find? Agnew was so desperate he made like a liberal at one point and attacked "monopolization of the news." We welcome him to the fold. But neither New York nor Washington are one-newspaper towns. In New York the pro-Nixon *Daily News* circulation is far bigger than the *Times* and the *Post* combined. In Washington, both the *Daily News* and the *Star* are conservative and pro-Nixon (as is the *Washington Post* quite often, most recently on Haynsworth and, alternate days, on his war policy). It is true that just three days after Agnew spoke a Washington paper had the impudence to write—

From the first announcement of the Mobilization plans, the Administration reacted by building a wall of indifference and hostility between itself and the demonstrators. The opposition was generally classified as the product of either stupidity or subversion. There was little attempt to reason, and a massive effort at rejection.

But that was an editorial in the conservative *Star* (Nov. 23).

We are seeing a marriage of paranoias. Nixon has always felt (remember his outburst after he lost the Governorship in California) that the media were against him. The military and its supporters in the State Department and the White House have been grumbling about press coverage ever since the Vietnam intervention began. The animosity deepened every time the reporters were proven right and the Generals wrong. The baldest and most recent expression of the bureaucracy's delusions came when Gen. Walt of the Marines told a press conference in Danang (*Washington Post,* Nov. 23) that the war would have been over a year ago if the American people had supported Lyndon Johnson! He criticized the news media for failing to present a "positive" picture of the

(Continued On Page Four)

Not Since Marie Antoinette

For sheer balderdash it would be difficult to exceed Herbert G. Klein's estimate: "Had it not been for the highly effective work of the Washington police, of the National Guard . . . for the reserve forces of the Defense Department and the complete cooperation of all elements of the government . . . the damage to Washington (Saturday night and the night before) would have been far greater than . . . the riots after the death of Martin Luther King." . . . Does anyone seriously believe that Washington's undermanned police force could contain 5,000 or 50,000 or 150,000 demonstrators bent on violence? . . . (T)he Nixon administration was less interested in trying to keep the march peaceful than in trying to make it seem less large and more violent than it really was, and in trying to scare the daylights out of that putative Silent Majority. . . . On Saturday and Sunday, the President by his own account was preoccupied with the football games. It was a fine afternoon for watching football, he is quoted as saying on Saturday, and for sheer piquancy, we have not heard the likes of that since Marie Antoinette.
—Washington Post, Nov. 18.

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STOCK MARKETS IN TOKYO AND NEW YORK the week Nixon and Sato reached their Okinawa agreement provided a lesson in militarism and imperialism. Stripped of empire, under a Constitution which renounces war and regular armies, Japan has become the third biggest industrial power, second only to the U.S. in the "free world." Tokyo's booming stock exchange set a historic high; for the first time average stock values rose above 2,200 yen. Here, burdened with the costs of empire, including the policing of Asia, the stock market has been plummeting in despair over runaway inflation and the Vietnamese war that caused it. The Dow Jones index of industrials fell to 823, a loss of 26.13 *in one week*. Nixon wants Japan to rearm and to share the burden of policing Asia. The Okinawa agreement brings that closer by allowing U.S. bases in Japan to be used for Asian wars. We are edging Japan toward the use of nuclear weapons. What if these are turned against us? Last time there was a militaristic Japan it claimed to be policing Asia against Communism. But when it struck, it struck at Pearl Harbor. What folly to invite a repetition!

Take SALT With A Grain Of . . .

THE PRESS IS FULL OF EUPHORIC NONSENSE about the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks in Helsinki. The test is MIRV, which we are already installing in our nuclear submarines. If Nixon believed in arms *limitation*, he would have opened the Helsinki talks with a proposal for a halt in MIRV testing. By the time the second round of talks begin in Vienna, it will probably be too late. The stage is set for a new and expensive upward spiral in the arms race.

DESPITE HEAVY DELETIONS BY THE PENTAGON CENSORS —one deletion is 14 pages long—the newly released executive session testimony taken by the Symington subcommittee on our commitments to the Philippines contains some basic revelations. One is the ludicrous character of the supposed threats against which we have been giving the Philippines an average $22.5 million a year for the past five years. Admiral Kauffman admitted the threat from China was "very small," and was even "loath" to admit there was a serious Communist threat inside the country. The total armed men of the Huks, in three separate groups, is given as 400 and their "mass base" as 30,000 to 35,000—out of a population of 37 million. Encounters with the Huks from January 1968 through August 1969 cost the Philippine armed forces 18 dead. If the internal menace grows, it will not be for lack of arms but for lack of land reform, on which the corrupt Filipino oligarchy is dragging its heels. No doubt the smart money in Manila figure that if a civil war does break out, we'll fight it for them, as in Vietnam.

Why Land Reform Lags In Saigon

Among the landowners who were once ready to support the plan, including many who either are members of the Assembly or are influential with various deputies or senators, the change of sentiment is directly tied to personal economic considerations that will be increasingly hard to challenge as the government's position in the countryside improves.

One expressed the sentiment of that growing group this way: "Six months ago, the land-to-the-tillers plan offered me a chance, to be perfectly frank, to get some American money for land that I had not even seen in years and that might have remained contested or in Viet Cong control for many more years. Now the government is moving into new areas in the countryside, and some of that land is beginning to look like it might be valuable again after all.

—"Thieu Proposal On Land Reform Is Losing Favor", Woodruff from Saigon; Baltimore Sun *Nov. 30.*

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF FRENCH WRITERS in a letter signed among others by Jean-Paul Sartre and Vercors has protested (*Le Monde*, Nov. 19) the expulsion of Alexander Solzhenitsyn from the Soviet Writers' Union, declaring it incredible that "the fatherland of triumphant socialism" has done to so distinguished a writer what even the Czar Nicholas had not dared do to Chekhov after he exposed the treatment of convicts in his book *Sakhalin Island* (1891), as Solzhenitsyn did the Soviet penal system in *The First Circle* and *One Day in The Life of Ivan Denisovich*. We hope American writers will make a similar protest to the Soviet Embassy.

"MAXIMUM PUBLICITY FOR MINIMUM CUTS by duplicate announcements is Senator Proxmire's characterization of Laird's highly publicized economy drive at the Pentagon. The same cuts are cited over and over again as if they were new. Some of them, Proxmire pointed out, only mean bigger spending in the future. He cited three major examples. The $200 million the Navy claims as savings in mothballing old ships will be more than offset by $2.6 billion in new ship construction in fiscal '70. The Air Force advertises a $320.9 million cut in purchases of the FB-111 bomber but is going ahead on a new bomber, now called the B-1—the prototypes alone will cost $2 billion and the projected fleet of 200 from $8 to $12 billion. The Pentagon even lists as an economy a "saving"

Silent Majority? Or an Outpouring from Republican Regulars?

Q. The President is stating what he believes to be a fact, namely, that his policy does have the support of the majority of the people and those who oppose it are in the minority. I am asking you, does he have facts to back that up?

A. Are you familiar with the recent Gallup poll?

Q. Is that the basis on which he is making that judgment?

A. I would not say that is the basis on which he is making the judgment. I would say that is an indication of the support that the President has.

Q. In his appeal to the silent majority, would he like to see an organization of demonstrations in support of his policy just as there are demonstrations against it?

A. Let me put it this way. I think the fact that we have had the response that we have had in terms of telegrams and phone calls indicates that the President's address last night has been very well received by the country. I think that the President made this clear.

Q. That 200,000-name telegram the President got this morning was done beforehand. So the President's speech did not have any effect on that. This was signed by people who agreed with him before.

A. Yes.

Q. I am wondering if you got any feeling of how many people who were phoning or telegraphing actually had their mind changed by the President last night as against how many people are doing what the Republican National committee asked them to do in sending in their support.

A. As you know, the President in his address last night did not solicit telegrams or phone calls.

Q. He did solicit support however.

A. That is correct.

—Ron Ziegler's White House A.M. press briefing Nov. 4.

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of $896 million on Johnson's Sentinel ABM but ultimately will spend $8 to $10 billion for Nixon's Safeguard ABM. Proxmire calls this a "Cut Now, Pay Later" policy.

A Triply Silent American

NIXON'S FOREMOST NOT-SO-SILENT AMERICAN seems to be Wm. J. Casey. Last spring Casey turned up as chairman of a "grass roots" organization for the ABM, and announced that a poll showed 84% of the American people—no less—favored Nixon's ABM. The "grass roots" of his effort turned out to be in Room 495 of the Executive Office building annex of the White House (see *Washington Star,* June 7). In July Casey was named by Nixon as an adviser to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. On October 15 there appeared a full page ad in the *Washington Post* saying the time had come for "silent Americans" to speak up in support of Nixon's Vietnam policy. Sure enough, there was Casey at the bottom of the ad as chairman of these silent Americans. Then on November 17 there was a full page ad in the *New York Times,* "Hold Your Ears Hanoi: Here Comes America's Silent Majority" and there was Casey's name at the bottom with a brand new "Tell It To Hanoi Committee" along with such other "silent Americans" as Clare Boothe Luce and Leo Cherne. Casey seems to be about as silent as a calliope.

PEOPLE IN GLASS HOUSES NOTE: In between speeches on tricky editorial tactics perhaps Agnew might find time to look at the USIA's new $200,000 quickie film on Nixon's "silent majority". The film featured Dr. Gallup and his poll showing a majority for Nixon's Vietnam policies but omitted Gallup's warning that "future backing of the President depends upon the pace of subsequent withdrawals."

VIETNAMESE BOAST THAT MALARIA WAS THEIR ALLY in fighting off Chinese invaders in centuries past. History seems to be repeating itself. A correspondent sent us a clipping from the special Sept. 1969 issue of *Military Medicine*, the journal of the Association of Military Surgeons of the U.S. reporting that malaria was "the single most important military medical problem encountered in Vietnam". There were 12,000 cases in 1968 which cost a quarter of a million man-days lost and over $1 million. We'll be lucky if returning veterans do not bring virulent strains of this disease home with them.

WE HOPE THE FBI will not be too alarmed by Mrs. Mitchell's appearance on CBS TV Nov. 21. Taken literally, the Attorney General's wife would make it appear that this Administration prefers Communists to liberals and hard-line Communists to "liberal Communists." Mrs. Mitchell said she didn't think the average American realized how desperate things become when "the very liberal Communists move into Washington." That's exactly how the Kremlin feels about "very liberal" Communists turning up in Moscow. She said her husband looked out the window during demonstrations at the Justice Department and thought "it looked like a Russian revolution going on." It was hard to figure whether this private remark by the Attorney General was said in approval or disapproval since his wife also said "my husband has said many times, some of the liberals in this country, he'd like to take them and change them for Russian Communists." The *Daily Worker* (now *Daily World*) has been trying hard for years to do just that.

"IT SEEMS STRANGE," a Harvard Med student writes us, "that President Nixon will listen to me only if I remain silent."

Sort of A Galloping Gallup

POSTMASTER GEN. BLOUNT: I arrived in South Vietnam two days after the President's November 3 speech and I had a chance to assess the reaction there. Of course as you would expect the Generals I talked with—and I talked with Gen. Abrams and 8 or 10 of the other Generals and Ambassador Bunker—were consistently extremely enthusiastic about the speech, as well as an expression of relief. But more importantly I think was the reaction of our men. I talked with more than 1,000 of them at these various bases. The reaction from them was one of solid support for the President.

—Press Conference at the White House, Nov. 18

The Postmaster General said he had "spent two weeks in the Far East, Including South Vietnam, Korea and Japan. It turns out that he had considerably less than four full days in Vietnam. When we checked with his office, we learned that he left Guam on Nov. 6, arrived in Saigon about noon that day and left Saigon Nov. 9 early enough to reach Tokyo that evening, a flight of 8 or 9 hours. If he talked with "more than 1,000" soldiers in that time, it must have been the fastest poll-taking in history. We wonder how he found time to talk with the Generals at all.

How To Cook Up An Optimistic Report on Vietnam For The White House

Q. How long was the committee in Vietnam?

A. We were in Vietnam itself for about a week. . . . Our trip was part of a round-the-world tour. We had some briefings here. We had some briefings in Honolulu . . . and we had some contact with the delegation in Paris before returning here. . . .

Q. Mr. Guillion, could I ask you if your committee in its inquiries, as you put it, in Vietnam found anything there that you disagreed with in the conduct of the war or the pursuit for peace, or did you pretty well feel that things were going well?

A. They were going, from our point of view, surprisingly well. . . .

Q. Did you make any attempt or were you able to talk to anybody in the Hanoi delegation or the Liberation Front in Paris?

A. We made no effort to do this. . . . Had we thought that would have been a proper part of our inquiry, we would have done that. It is also true in Saigon. . . . If we had wanted to go to see prisoners in jail or opposition leaders in clandestine circumstances, it would not have been clandestine so far as we were concerned. We did not do that. We did talk to opposition party leaders in Saigon. . . .

Q. What opposition leaders in Vietnam did you talk to?

A. Different political parties. I would have to look at the list to give you their names . . .

Q. Did you talk to General Minh?

A. No, we didn't talk to General Minh. . . .

Q. Is the committee in full agreement with every aspect of the President's policy?

A. We went out there without any consultation with the White House itself. We had some briefings with the military department. I would say where we diverged are matters of detail, of emphasis, rather. . . .

—White House Press Conference Nov. 6 by Dr. Edmund Gullion for the Citizens Committee for Peace with Freedom in Vietnam, of which former Senator Douglas and George Meany are co-chairmen. This pro-Johnson group made the headlines with an optimistic report and advised against "a too rapid rate of replacement."

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Pro-Nixon Demonstrators Were Sparse and Screwball in Tone

(Continued From Page One)

conflict and said how long the war lasts would "depend in lots of respects on how good treatment it gets from our news media." So the main obstacle to victory is the First Amendment, and Jeffersonianism will soon be un-American again.

Plain Political Incompetence

In Saigon the regime is cracking down on the press as dissatisfaction rises. Here the Administration is trying to make independent reporting seem unpatriotic. In the events of the tumultuous last two weeks, the Administration has been demonstrating its incompetence on many levels; to give it freedom from criticism would be an invitation to mismanagement. The Haynsworth affair was one example. We cheer the outcome but note that it was a self-inflicted defeat. The Attorney General was slipshod in his preliminary inquiry; the White House was crude in its pressure tactics. The low point was the crass attempt at political blackmail—the threat to impeach Mr. Justice Douglas if the nomination were rejected. The revolt in the Northern Republican leadership showed the bankruptcy of the Southern strategy and its corollary, the attempt to compete with Wallace in Know Nothingism. Such hands at the wheel of state are a safety hazard.

The handling of the Mobilization missed disaster by a hair's breadth. Until the intervention of Mayor Washington the Administration was on the verge of denying a parade permit and doing a Daley. At the Pentagon, on the eve of the Mobilization, a Mass in the south concourse, where it blocked no traffic, was broken up by the police (all black for the occasion) and an Episcopal Bishop and the peaceful celebrants arrested just as it drew to its close. It was an ugly scene a modicum of good sense would have avoided. Before the Mobilization, the Administration ostentatiously moved troops into the capital, as if for an uprising and filled the press with alarms. It reminded me of the days when Hoover called out the troops under Mac Arthur and drove the Bonus Marchers out of town in a glorious military victory. It sealed Hoover's defeat in 1932. The Republicans are trigger-happy again.

Despite the incendiary forecasts, the Mobilization proved as pacific as the Moratorium. The March of Death was a masterpiece of dramaturgy. Thanks to an army of marshals, and logistic preparations few armies could match, Saturday's parade went off without incident, the greatest outpouring of its kind in U.S. history. It was quite a contrast to the sparse turnout and screwball tone of the pro-Nixon demonstration four days earlier. Even so, when the Mobilization drew to its close, the police roughed up departing citizens on the Monument grounds and outside churches where buses were being loaded, as if someone higher up regretted the absence of violence. In the same spirit the Attorney General over-reacted to the Justice Department demonstration against the Conspiracy Trial by drenching the downtown areas with tear gas and locking up passersby and two reporters with imbecile impartiality.

The Depths To Which Our Country Has Fallen

"Some of the people weren't old enough to walk yet, so I couldn't see how they could be Vietcong."

—Sgt. Michael A. Bernhardt of Franklin Square, L.I., interviewed at Fort Dix on the massacre of the villagers of Songy in South Vietnam. He refused to participate and was "ostracized" for his refusal. This terrible story was dug out by Seymour M. Hersh, working with a group of energetic youngsters here in Washington at the "Dispatch" news syndicate. Bigger papers have been stealing the story, often within minimal or no credit. The village was nicknamed "Pinkville" because of its alleged Vietcong sympathies.

Synthetic Tough Guys

Nothing is more dangerous than weak men who think they are tough guys. The resignations of Lodge and Walsh at the Paris peace talks, coming after the threat to re-escalate in the Nov. 3 speech, indicate that the Administration is getting ready to be "tough" in Vietnam as at home. There is no sign that it is heeding the repeated warnings of the Gallup organization that its good showing in the public opinion polls is predicated on the expectation that Nixon "will remove U.S. troops from Vietnam within a reasonable time." (*New York Times* Nov. 23). That "silent majority", if any, will evaporate if this expectation is disappointed. This is where Nixon is most vulnerable. It is the job of the peace movement to fan out into the country with a campaign of education while it can. This Administration is capable of suicidal folly. It may resume the bombing of the North. It may try another witch hunt at home. We believe that if it tries either it will be swept away in a landslide in 1972, as Hoover was 40 years ago. But there are bitter battles ahead. We had better get ready for them.

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